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AUTHOR Nykodym, Nick; Ruud, William N.
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ABSTRACT

Communication skills are important in every part of organizational life. However, a number of people are unable to realize their organizational potential because of communication apprehension (CA). Its pervasiveness has ranked it as the single most severe handicap facing Americans today. The Intraview Communication Intervention Strategy may be a means of reducing high CA. The intraview concept is an intervention strategy based on helping individuals to know more about themselves and their interactions with others. This strategy was implemented in a pretest/posttest/control design. Subjects, 40 students enrolled in Business Administration, were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. Treatment consisted of a class using the Intraview Strategy of teaching organizational communication. The control group consisted of a class that did not use this strategy. The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension was administered both before and after the intervention. Results showed that the intraview strategy reduced apprehension at a statistically significant level. Strategies like intraview will aid the high CA individuals in pursuit of their career goals, since communications skills are vital to the job application process. (DF)

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INTRAVIEWS: CAREER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

by

Nick Nykodym, Ph.D.

and

William N. Ruud, Ph.D.

College of Business Administration
The University of Toledo
2801 West Bancroft Street
Toledo, Ohio 43606

(419) 472-5753

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Intraview©: Career Development Through Business Communication

Abstract

Communication skills are important in every part of organizational life. However, a number of people are unable to realize their organizational potential because of Communication Apprehension (CA). Its pervasiveness has ranked it as the single most severe handicap facing Americans today.

The authors posit the Intraview©: Communication Intervention Strategy as a means of reducing high CA. The Intraview© concept is an intervention strategy based on helping individuals to know more about themselves and their interactions with others. This strategy was implemented in a pre-test/post-test/control design and Communication Apprehension was reduced at a statistically significant level (.01).

The authors conclude that change strategies like Intraview© will aid the high CA individuals in pursuit of their career goals. Communication skills are vital to the job application process.

Intraview: Career Development Through Business Communication

Communication effectiveness is vital to every organization. A typical manager spends about 90% of his/her time in communication (Timm, 1980, p. v).

Many quality students fail to receive their proper place in the work environment. Inadequate communication skills have cost interviewees a job offer. Inability to express oneself; lack of confidence, poise, enthusiasm, nervousness; and failure to look the interviewer in the eye are listed as negative factors which frequently lead to rejection of a candidate at an employment interview (Nykodym and Simonetti, 1981, p. 91). Interviewers' summary evaluation forms which are completed after a placement interview typically rate the job candidate on such characteristics as self-expression, self-confidence, enthusiasm, likeableness, ability to sell oneself, aggressiveness, and poise (Nykodym and Simonetti, 1981, p. 90).

Samples of college and university students reveal that 10 to 20% suffer from high Communication Apprehension and 40% have an apprehension problem that has some impact on their ability to communicate (McCroskey, 1972). Severe Communication Apprehension has been termed a "handicap" (McCroskey, 1976, p. 39).

> Further, ... we can safely estimate that there are at least as many people suffering debilitating Communication Apprehension as suffer from all other handicaps [learning disabled, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, hard of hearing, deaf, crippled, partially sighted, or blind[. ... Communication Apprehension, then, may be the single most pervasive handicap confronting children in our schools and citizens in our society (McCroskey, 1976, p. 41).

The communication handicap may be called reticence, communication apprehension, unwillingness to communicate, or shyness, yet the constructs overlap to a great extent (Kelly, 1982). Communication Apprehension (CA) may be defined as, " . . . an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78)."

Review of the literature reveals that Communication Apprehension has a negative impact on the job application process. It was discovered that applicants with high CA would sacrifice higher pay and status rather than take a job requiring higher levels of communication (Daly and McCroskey, 1975). Even if the position provided more status and income, the potential applicant would avoid the job. Daly and Leth (1976) noted that high CA job seekers were perceived as individuals who required more training, would be less successful on the job, and would have more problems in interpersonal relationships with fellow workers.

Additional data revealed that job applicants with high CA were less likely to be granted an interview (Daly and Leth, 1976). In the interview, high CA applicants were less likely to be offered a position (Daly and Leth, 1976). Once on the job, employees with high CA had lower satisfaction with their work, supervision, and the general work environment (Falcione, McCroskey and Daly, 1977). In fact, trait CA correlates significantly with state anxiety. Multiple regression revealed a correlation of .69. The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) survey was found to be reliable as a cross-situational predictive instrument (McCroskey and Beatty, 1984).

The review of the literature revealed that a high Communication Apprehensive person will have more difficulty obtaining a job and will have less satisfaction in that position after the hiring process has been completed. The apparent unwillingness to communicate will interfere with potential organizational success if the CA is able to clear the job application maze.

The authors of this study suggest the Intraview Communication Intervention Strategy as a means of reducing Communication Apprehension.

Methodology

Instrument

The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) was used to measure Communication Apprehension. The PRCA has been used for over a decade in measurement of Communication Apprehension, and has been used in over 50 studies since its inception (McCroskey, 1977, p. 83). Analysis of the PRCA revealed:

> Internal reliability estimates for the scale have ranged from .92 to .96. Test-retest reliability (N=762) over a seven week period was .82 (McCroskey, 1978, p. 201).

The research concluded that the PRCA was both a reliable and valid measure of the construct of Communication Apprehension (McCroskey, 1978).

Intraview© Communication Intervention Strategy

The authors maintain that an important part of effective communication is individual self-awareness and assessment. The Intraview© concept was coined to reflect an intervention strategy based on helping individuals to know about themselves and to know what "makes them tick." With Intraview© , they can better analyze and understand what they say and why they say it in a particular situation (Nykodym and Simonetti, 1981, p. 7). The Intraview© Strategy consisted of four units in intrapersonal, interpersonal,

group, and intergroup communication. Each unit consists of experience-based learning exercises that begin with an Intraview© (self-assessment questionnaire). Each participant then receives insight and analysis via lecture/discussion of the material. A group participation exercise followed illustrating and integrating the unit material. For example, the unit on Interpersonal Feedback Style provided Intraview© on the styles of giving feedback, then input on options available to each participant (in addition to their own style), and lastly, a chance to practice a variety of styles in a group experience-based exercise.

Subjects

Students in the College of Business Administration were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. Treatment consisted of a class using the Intraview© strategy of teaching organizational communication. A control group consisted of a class in business administration that did not use Intraview© strategy. The PRCA was administered in a pre-test/post-test control design. Forty (40) subjects comprised the experimental group.

Analysis

Scores for Communication Apprehension were obtained from the PRCA. T-tests were performed on the pre-test and post-test means of the control group to determine if factors

other than the treatment could have accounted for variation. T-tests also were performed on the pre-test and post-test means of the experimental group to determine if the treatment had any effect.

Results

The t-test on the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups was not significant, nor was the t-test on the pre-test and post-test means of the control group.

The t-test on the pre-test and post-test scores of the high Communication Apprehensive individuals in the treatment group was significant at the .01 level (see Table 1). CA individuals were defined as anyone scoring one standard deviation above the mean on the PRCA (Kelly, 1982, p. 106).

Discussion

The failure to obtain a significant t-test score on the pre-test of the experimental and control groups indicated that randomization was effective and that the two groups did not differ significantly.

The failure to obtain a significant t-test score on the pre-test to post-test scores of the control group indicated that factors other than treatment did not account for a significant amount of the variation.

A true experimental design (pre-test, post-test, control) will control for all the sources of internal invalidity, according to Campbell and Stanley (1963). History, maturation, testing, instrumentation, regression, selection, and mortality, as well as interaction of selection and maturation, are controlled by this design. Campbell and Stanley expressed concern for the external-validity factor of interaction of testing and treatment in the use of pre-test, post-test control design. However, it is doubtful that this interaction occurred since treatments, evaluations, exercises, and simulations in inventory or test form were widely used during scheduled meeting times, thereby reducing their novelty and impact.

The use of the Intraview Strategy as a means of reducing Communication Apprehension among high CA individuals was found to be significant at the .01 level (Table 1).

Although we can generalize with accuracy only about the business-administration majors from the university at which this study was conducted, the study nevertheless shows the important role a strategy like Intraview can provide in significant reduction of the Communication Apprehension of high CA individuals. Communication skills are vital to the job application process whether it is telephone contact, interviews, or follow-up meetings. Job applicants must be able to "sell themselves". Without the ability to convey a

positive impression, the chances of receiving a job offer are greatly reduced. The authors of this study conclude that a strategy like Intraview© can prepare the High Communication Apprehensive person for the job application process.

Table 1

COMPARISON OF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST SCORES FOR HIGH APPREHENSIVES IN TREATMENT GROUP

	Pre-Test	Post-Test	D (Difference)	D^2	t
SUM	868	728	140	4031	3.066*
MEAN	94.445	80.889			

* Significant at the .01 level, one-tailed test.

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